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MFA FINAL VISUAL PRESENTATION

BY

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

IN

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DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled:

Final Visual Presentation

Submitted by Heather Louise Huston in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts.



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I hereby release the following works for incorporation into the University Collections,
University of Alberta, as part of the Master of Fine Arts Thesis Collection:

TITLE	DATE	MEDIUM	SIZE
Interior #5	2006	Litho on Plexi Foamcore, wood	29½"x 39½"x1½"

Insurance Value: \$1,500.00

The rooms in these images were developed from miniatures and retain the strange disparity of scale that occurs when reality is mimicked in the realm of the small. However, they subvert the traditional readings of dollhouses and miniatures as nostalgic, idyllic, and detailed structures for the eye to consume. They stand instead as an imperfect scenario imbued with the strangeness of the everyday in a stark and strange context. If we look to the miniature for the ideal, we find here instead a peculiar reflection of everyday living. They are outside the cute, exaggeratedly symbolic domain of the dollhouse and instead exist in a reality where the physical becomes psychological. They exist as possible spaces that open up questions about the ability for interiors and objects to retain the emotional residue of our actions.

These spaces are empty of figures but retain their presence. It remains unclear, however, whether they left just moments ago or days earlier. When looking at these rooms, there is the sense that we've just missed the action, or we aren't able to see into the part of the room where something is taking place. But they suggest too that perhaps beyond the frame, there is nothing; it's where everything falls apart. These images seem to collapse time in that they represent a period during which there was only the still emptiness of the room. There is stillness in these spaces, a quiet presence and the sense as a viewer of being a voyeur, being privileged with emotional information that would otherwise be un-viewable.

Invariably, the repetition of familiar objects in the interiors of *Model Homes* is a bit disquieting and reflects the sensation that occurs when we visit the homes of our neighbors and friends and find that our dresser, our table, our doorframe have preceded us.

I want to let the familiar tell a story in a way that is not. I want to bring to the forefront the commonplace, the mundane, the unnoticed props that surround us and reveal their capability to record the emotional context of everyday occurrences that surround them. The stripped down environments used in *Model Homes* bring to the forefront the mood established by the relationship between certain objects without the interference of unrelated items; they have been emptied out until they create a new type of meaning and reading of the objects and environments. By establishing a new context for these objects, their relationship to our own experience is altered to the point where the images begin perhaps to reference themselves and the viewer is left with the task of bridging the peculiar gap that exists between the space they occupy and the space created by these interiors.

